

a material and by means of its outlines. As a material: in the crystal-clear, flawless, heavy vitreous flux whose thick wall is properly revealed only by long, deep cuts; or in the fragile glass balls and hemispheres resembling soap bubbles and used for wine glasses or to hold single flower stalks. Between these two extremes, the material contains the possibility of many nuances of expression. But it is perhaps only through the treatment with cutting wheels, diamonds, and fine etching that the frozen soul of glass is fully revealed.

Less conspicuous but very interesting is the work of the handweaving crafts. Handweaving enterprises show the beauty of the natural wool in their finished products. Instead of dying their wool they use its natural shades in their designs; others even use unspun wool flocks in their creations.

The uncompromisingly pure form in applied arts, with no ornamentation whatever, a form which has become known abroad as the "plain German form," is a necessary preliminary step which in itself may achieve perfection. But when an implement, a vessel, is decorated, this decoration must not be added from outside, must not be stuck on, so to speak. The ornament grows from within and, in its richness of movement, points out the living beauty of the material used. Indeed, the artistic task set the

creative craftsman by modern Germany is to make the raw material speak.

This trend toward nature and simplicity was all the more to be welcomed since it corresponded with the economic situation in Germany. At first it was simply because there was little money for such things in Germany that German raw materials only could be employed, that great simplicity and economy were imperative. Now we know that this road has brought us to a new appreciation of art, has taught us a new attitude which we shall retain even after the external compulsion has been removed.

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We have dealt mainly with the artistic crafts and with handmade articles, although we are aware of the fact that after this war most of the articles of daily use will have to be produced by machine. The demand for new furniture, crockery, carpets, curtains etc., will be so vast that only mass production will be able to fill it. But whether an article is produced in a single model by hand or in thousands of copies by machine: the principles applied to its style and design are the same. Artists, craftsmen, engineers, and industrial workers will collaborate toward the end that the new homes of Germany shall be places of comfort and beauty founded in the materials of nature brought to life in perfect forms.

## THE SHOW GOES ON

By CARL GILBERT

*When the article "History Reigned on Tokyo's Stage" appeared in our April issue, the nine leading theaters of Tokyo had just closed their doors as an emergency measure caused by the war. The following report from our Tokyo collaborator shows, however, that—in spite of some changes—Nippon's theatrical life continues to flourish vigorously.*

### FOR THE PEOPLE

**B**Y the end of March the new regulations governing theatrical performances were moderated, so that two of the nine large theaters in Tokyo are permitted to give performances again as from April 1. On March 27 the two leading theatrical concerns, Shochiku and Toho, issued a joint statement to the press declaring that their troupes would take turns in giving performances in those two theaters. Expressing their thanks to the authorities for permitting them to use the two theaters, they promised to break with their former customs, to

reform the theatrical world, and to support the war effort to the best of their ability by means of their performances. Four of Tokyo's best-known theatrical troupes are giving performances again: the Kabuki troupe, Roppa Furukawa's comedy troupe, the Shinseishimpa troupe, and the Zenshinza troupe. In addition to the large theaters there are, of course, innumerable small and middle-sized theaters in Tokyo, which are all playing to packed houses.

No more extravagant performances mainly for the well-to-do are being given. The maximum admission fee including the 100-

per-cent Government tax has been fixed at 5 yen. Workers in armament factories receive a reduction of 30 per cent on the admission fees. The length of each performance has been limited to two and a half hours.

The authorities are encouraging famous troupes and actors or actresses to give special performances all over the country in convalescent homes for wounded soldiers, in armament factories and mining districts. Not long ago, the Kabuki stars Kikugoro and Ennosuke and their respective troupes made a tour through the Kyushu mining and armament centers and played with great success before the workers there. The Government bears part of the expenses for these performances for war workers.

Amateur dramatic performances under expert direction in the great mining and industrial centers as well as in rural centers are also actively encouraged by the Government. Very often an evening of entertainment in such a mining or industrial center is hooked up over the radio and broadcast to the entire nation. In addition to theatricals, there are concerts and storytelling.

#### THE REPERTOIRE

All this goes to show that the Government has realized the beneficial influence of good entertainment on the productive power of all classes of war workers. The guiding principle for performances is that they should provide the spectator with strength for his next day's work. There are roughly three classes of plays now being performed:

(1) Kabuki and other historical plays emphasizing Japanese national virtues, especially those of patriotism and of unswerving loyalty unto death, loyalty toward the feudal lord, toward parents, on the part of the mother toward her child, of the wife toward her husband, and of the friend toward his friend.

(2) Military plays, in particular about the heroes of the Greater East Asia War, their training, their fighting, and their supreme sacrifice for Tenno and country as an example for the nation to live up to.

(3) Problem plays assisting the National State Policies. These plays are of a diverse and manifold nature. At the present time, the greatest stress is being laid on stories dealing with the necessity of exerting every effort in the war production. A certain amount of plays to evoke hatred for the

enemy are, of course, also being produced. Finally, a limited amount of plays dealing with the culture of other East Asiatic countries—some of them translations of plays from these countries—are being encouraged.

While modern military and problem films have predominated in the cinema world of late, the majority of the Tokyo theaters have been presenting one Kabuki or other historical play in addition to one modern military or problem play. The "classical" Kabuki troupe, which is distinguished from other popular Kabuki or historical-play troupes by the appellation *Ohkabuki* (Great Kabuki), has been presenting one historical tragedy and one dance pantomime.

One of the results of the reduction in price of admittance has been a simplification of stage decoration in order to reduce the cost of production and to keep the number of stage hands at a minimum. Revolving stages, traps, and similar stage effects requiring many stage hands are dispensed with. As for the stage decoration itself, the result of the lowering of admittance prices has been a movement away from the naturalistic Western style of decoration to the traditional symbolic Japanese style. To give a few examples: a house is indicated by the barest rudiments of a Japanese house, the open sliding doors showing as a background a large canvas boldly outlining a Japanese garden. A bamboo grove or pine forest is indicated simply by one or two groups of bamboo and at most two or three trees. The Japanese being past masters at this symbolization, this enforced trend has had a salutary effect on the artistic standard.

#### DEATH OF A PATRIOT

According to unanimous press reviews, the best play produced in April was given by the Great Kabuki troupe. It is *Dai Nanko*, in which the end of the great imperial loyalist Kusunoki Masashige after the battle of Minatogawa and the heroic bearing of his wife and his eldest son are shown. Kusunoki Masashige is revered by the entire nation as an emblem of loyalty and supreme sacrifice for the Emperor. He is deified under the name of "Dai Nanko," his principal shrine being at Minatogawa in Kobe. April 25 was the 650th anniversary of his birth, and impressive rites were held in Tokyo and Osaka.

The *Tokyo Shimbun* writes about the first act to the effect that Matsumoto Koshiro's performance in the part of Kusunoki Masa-

shige was so great as to be beyond all criticism, that one was spellbound as by an almost religious awe. This first act of the play is, incidentally, the greatest. In order to save ten thousand soldiers of the loyalist army and enable them to get to Kyoto to defend the rightful Emperor, Kusunoki Masashige, with a small detachment of only seven hundred men, had held up the mighty army of the usurper Ashikaga Takauji. In the end, all the seven hundred except Kusunoki Masashige and twelve companions were killed in battle. These thirteen men felt then that they could no longer hold up

Ashikaga Takauji's tens of thousands of soldiers, and they retired to a small farmhouse. This is where the play begins. It shows the men, all of them wounded, deciding to kill themselves rather than surrender. Matsumoto Koshiro, who is over seventy years old, rose to the supreme heights of a tragedian at the moment when he declared, before killing himself, that he was determined to serve the Emperor in seven lives in undying faithfulness.

It is this spirit of Dai Nanko which lives on in the Nipponese soldier.

## WORLD PRESS DIGEST

*A large number of newspapers and periodicals from countries outside of Greater East Asia have during the last few months been placed at our disposal. Many of these publications contain interesting material which enables us to throw a glance into those parts of the world with which we have no contact as a result of the war. In the following pages we present condensations of some of these items as they appeared in the world's press during the last few months.—K.M.*

### EYE BANK

(From "Time")

Six blind people were waiting in a Manhattan hospital last week for second-hand eyes. Never since doctors discovered how to replace fogged corneas with clear ones from corpses have there been enough eye transplants to go round. Doctors estimate that the cornea operation could help 100,000 U.S. citizens to see, but it is a rare type of philanthropist who at his death gives his sound eyes for this purpose.

To remedy the local eye shortage, the two big hospitals which do a lot of New York City's eye work (Cornell Medical Center, Manhattan Eye and Ear Hospital) are starting an eye bank. It will be run on the same principle as a blood bank except that 1) any healthy human eye will do for transplanting—blood type does not matter; 2) doctors do not like to use grafts from eyes that have been kept more than 72 hours, so the bank's assets must be used more quickly than a blood bank's.

The plan is to get 100 or more metropolitan hospitals to contribute eyes from cadavers, always getting legal releases, even for willed eyes, as relatives often object to their removal. Each of the hospitals in succession will get a week's supply of eyes, will turn over any extra eyes to other hospitals that need them. A very few eyes will go a long way—one sound eye can

provide grafts for as many as three blind eyes. Once the eye bank gets established, no blind person whose cornea can be repaired should have to wait very long to see.

### SWITZERLAND'S OCEAN-GOING FLEET

*(The joke about the Swiss navy is one of long standing. Since the early days of the war, however, Switzerland has had own her merchant marine, in spite of the fact that the country has no access to the sea. The following is a condensation of an article appearing in the "Neue Zürcher Zeitung.")*

During the early part of 1939 the first suggestions were made to the Swiss Government to purchase some ocean freighters so that, in the case of war, products needed by Switzerland from overseas could be fetched by ships flying the Swiss flag. But after having made inquiries in London and Washington, the Swiss authorities arrived at the conclusion that a solution of this kind was impossible. The Government itself could not at that time consider starting a shipping enterprise of its own, as its organization was not elastic enough and did not possess the necessary experience. For the founding of a Swiss private shipping enterprise, conditions were also unfavorable at the beginning of 1939, as the shipping firms of all countries were working at a loss as a result of the depression that had been lasting for five years.

A practical solution was finally found in the charter of Greek ships of a total tonnage